TRU TeamWorks

June 25, 2007

WIPP Quick Facts
(As of 6-24-07)

5,894
Shipments received since opening

49,206
Cubic meters of waste disposed

91,559
Containers disposed in the underground

New system to improve leak testing on WIPP-bound shipping containers

Save time and save money. That's what a new invention by WTS employee Todd Sellmer aims to do.

The Automated Rate of Rise Leak Test System (RoRLTS) is a new piece of equipment that will help in detecting if there are any leaks in the TRU waste shipping packages before they are transported. The new system will meet preshipment requirements and maintain WIPP's safe standards.

The system checks for leaks by detecting pressure changes. It performs 150 mathematical calculations quickly and eliminates human error.

"This equipment is unique," says Sellmer, WTS Manager of Packaging, "It's the only one like it in the world."

The RoRLTS is replacing the helium leak testing system in most situations. Helium saturates the O-ring seals on the packages requiring replacement and retesting of the packages prior to shipment. By implementing the new RoRLTS, over $350,000 will be saved on ring replacement a year.

Sellmer worked with subcontractor Automated Control Systems Incorp. (ACSI) to create the RoRLTS. ACSI, located in Arizona, received the WIPP Medallion Award for its effort.

The Pressure Change Measurement Method that is implemented by the RoRLTS has been approved by CBFO and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Pending final approval, the system may be put into operation as early as October.

Personnel will have to be trained on how to use the equipment properly. The system's first use is planned for a remote-handled TRU waste shipment.

The new equipment is designed to work on all WIPP shipping packages, including the TRUPACT-II and RH-72B.

New WIPP Home Page combines style and function

Don't touch that mouse! If you visited the WIPP Home Page lately, you may have thought you typed in the wrong address. But before you hit the Back button, take a second look. WIPP has a newly redesigned Web site.

The banner above has been a familiar site to visitors of the WIPP Home Page since 2001. The site's newly designed main page is shown at right. Visit it at www.wipp.energy.gov.

If you haven't seen it yet, you may want to take a few minutes to see what's new. Sure the new WIPP Home Page looks different, but the changes aren't just cosmetic. Substantial changes have been made to improve the site's navigation, organization and overall ease of use. The point of all these changes, of course, is to make our Web site one that provides the information you want in a way that you can easily find it.

Pop-up menus improve site navigation.

Here's an overview of some of the major changes.

The look
First things first. The look. The last major overhaul of the WIPP Home Page was about six years ago, so it was time for a new look. By incorporating design elements from the U.S. Department of Energy's home page and benchmarking other well-designed sites in the public and private sector, the new WIPP Home Page began to take shape.

The contemporary look of the site includes a three-column format that provides easy reading, flexible space for photos and graphics, and consistent use of colors.

Navigation
Improving the ability to get to information quickly and easily was a must. The site's most significant change in navigation is the use of pop-up menus. This feature allows you to go directly to the information you are looking for from nearly every page on the site, without having to search through various menus or to continuously use the Back button.

Quick links are also available on many of the pages to jump to a specified topic on a page and/or return to the top of the page without scrolling.

Organization
The organization of WIPP documents has changed dramatically. Documents are now organized by category, making it easier to find what you are looking for. But if you're unsure which category to search under, you may also browse by title or by document number.

Another goal was to make the transition easy for frequent users. Much of the old Web site's structure was left intact so that bookmarks or favorites will continue to work. Some site page addresses may change in the months ahead to improve WIPP staff's ability to manage and update site information.

New stuff
The best sites on the Web frequently update their information so that visitors will keep coming back to see what's new and exciting. With the launch of the new WIPP Home Page, several new features have been added to keep the site fresh.

One is a Careers at WIPP page. Individuals who wish to apply for a job at WIPP will be directed to appropriate recruiting sites for the various WIPP organizations that offer job opportunities.

Other new features include a new photo gallery, new and updated fact sheets and a collection of short video clips. The site's main page will frequently display new photos and highlight new additions or other noteworthy items and events.

So take a few minutes and browse through the new WIPP Home Page at www.wipp.energy.gov. It just may change the way you learn about WIPP.

Looking back ...

Recognize these employees?

Twenty years ago, Santa Fe photographer Danny Lehman took this photo for the November 1987 issue of National Geographic (Vol. 172, No.5).

The “technicians” were conducting geothermal studies underground at WIPP. Pictured (L to R) are **James Cordova**, SNL; **John Vanderkraats**, WTS; **Tommy Richey**, WTS; **Steve Lieberwirth**, formerly WTS; **Jeff Knox**, WTS; **Tom Burford**, SNL and **J.D. Blair**, WTS.

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New state law affects Skeen-Whitlock Building

Cigarette smokers are undergoing a minor change of scene during work breaks.

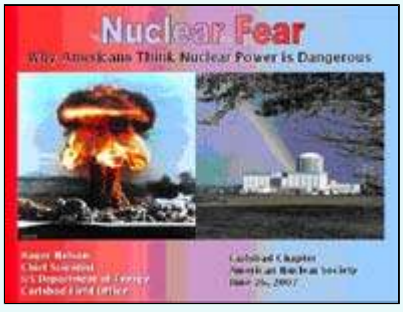
Recent state government regulations are restricting smokers to designated locations to prevent secondhand smoke exposure.

Newly specified smoking areas at the Skeen-Whitlock Building (SWB) went into effect June 15. New signs and receptacles are in place to help identify permitted smoking areas.

The New Mexico State Legislature’s House Bill 283, also known as the Dee Johnson Clean Indoor Air Act, requires New Mexico’s workplaces to be smoke-free and to prevent secondhand smoke near building entrances, windows, and ventilation systems.

The purpose of the act is to reduce secondhand smoke in or near the workplace. Exposure to secondhand smoke may increase cancer, heart problems and breathing difficulties. According to the a Surgeon General’s report, secondhand smoke exposure has decreased over 70 percent since the late 1980s due to smoking restrictions and regulations like House Bill 283.

CBFO chief scientist to speak at local ANS meeting



The American Nuclear Society, Carlsbad Section, is sponsoring a presentation at the Pizza Inn, 1210 West Pierce in Carlsbad, N.M., on Tuesday, June 26, at 6:30 p.m.

CBFO Chief Scientist Roger Nelson will give a presentation titled, "Nuclear Fear - Why Americans Think Nuclear Power is Dangerous.”

The presentation is open to the public.

The new designated smoking areas are located at the rear of the building in the no-parking area and the southwest and northwest corners of the structure. Signs will be placed at each parking area driveway entrance and at each of the four primary entrances of the building.

Designated smoking areas at the WIPP site will not be affected by the regulation changes.

Celebrate the Fourth of July with safety in mind

The crackle and boom of fireworks will soon be heard in the evenings as people begin celebrating Independence Day. While the sight of fireworks displays fill children with wonder and awe, few realize the dangers that exist, even from fireworks assumed to be safe for small children.

About 12,000 people in the U.S. are treated for fireworks-related injuries annually. Nearly 40 percent of these injuries happen to children 14 and younger. The majority (about 87 percent) of injuries to children result from three favorites: bottle rockets, fire crackers and sparklers.

Did you know that bottle rockets can move as fast as 200 miles per hour and explode in midair?

Did you know that most fire crackers contain about 50 mg of gun powder?

Did you know that sparklers burn at 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to melt metal?

Public fireworks displays, like the one conducted by the Carlsbad Fire Department by trained fire fighters, are one of the safest ways to enjoy the holiday.

If you do purchase fireworks, only adults should handle them. If children are allowed to use them, they should be closely supervised by an adult at all times.

One of the reasons fireworks injuries continue to occur is because people just don't realize how dangerous fireworks can be. If you and your family plan to use fireworks during this holiday, please use them with caution and follow these safety tips:

- Do not allow children to run with sparklers. Pieces of sparkler can fly back and burn the child or the child could fall and be injured by the metal handle.
- Dispose of used sparklers in a bucket of water.
- Always light fireworks in a clear area away from on-lookers and flammable materials.
- Light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting.
- Never explode fireworks in any container.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- Keep a bucket of water on hand for emergencies.

If someone suffers skin burns from fireworks, apply cold water. If the burned area is on the face, hand, feet, or eyes, or affects a significant portion of the body, seek immediate medical attention.

Interested in WIPP?

If you would like to be notified when TRU TeamWorks is updated with the latest information about WIPP, send an e-mail message to TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

For a printer-friendly version of TRU TeamWorks, please click here.